

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

534²⁴ The dwelling may contain a musical instrument or two not
177 necessarily connected with ritual, a one-stringed violin (probably
inspired by European models), and more infrequently a flute.

361 The elaborate system of affinal avoidances makes it expedient
621 to allow some space between the home of the man who joins the
encampment and those of his wife's relatives. Therefore, a dis-

602 tance of two or three hundred paces may separate two dwellings.
Each family is afforded privacy, yet relatives and neighbors are
near enough in case of danger. The comparative independence of
each home is further safeguarded by the nature of the country,
by natural barriers which often conceal one dwelling from the
next, even though the distance which separates them is not great.

721 Because these people raid surrounding groups as a regular course,
312 they have reason to fear retaliation and therefore seek to conceal
their habitations as much as possible. Desirable locations must
be near enough to streams and springs to insure an adequate
water supply and close to the highlands so that foes can be led
into a fruitless and wearying search through the hills.

361 The possessions, the materials from which they are made, and
484 the uses which they imply make it plain that the food economy
221 is based on the wild animals and plants of the region and that the
people must be ready to follow a seasonal food quest and to re-

433 move to a new locality when it becomes apparent that hunting or
gathering is more rewarding there. A popular folk tale, explic-
538 able in terms of this life, tells how a man becomes separated from
the members of his family and seeks to rejoin them, passing
camp site after camp site which they have abandoned, until he
finally overtakes them. Other accounts describe the frequent
movements of the people, with those who have no horses carrying
their goods and their children.

361 Sometimes a single household goes off alone on an economic
621 errand and even remains by itself for some time. But, ordinarily,
596 the extended family breaks camp and moves as a body. It can,
433 therefore, be called the smallest unit prepared to maintain a
separate economic existence for any length of time. Thus, even
571 in the midst of the nomadic phase of his life, the most significant
social bonds remain undisturbed for the individual.

Despite constant movement, population tends to concentrate

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

332

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

262

Once my brother brought a can of sardines to camp. He was going to open it for lunch. My mother didn't know what he had and she brought out a plate for him to put them on. She asked him what it was. He didn't want to tell her. He held the can behind him. Then he brought it out and opened it up and spilled the fish on the plate my mother was holding. She looked at it. She didn't know what it was. It looked funny to her. She asked my brother, and he told her.

You know how those old people are. She gave a yell and threw it. It landed right in the lap of the old man. The old man just sat there and looked at it. The plate was lying there in the dirt. I nearly died laughing. My brother was angry. He said, "What did you throw them away for?" She said, "If you bring me something bad like that again, I'll throw it right in your face."

[825]

"The frog is not eaten; it is classed with fish." "The frog is classed as a snake. We do not eat it. If you do, it will make you

[826]

walk like a cowboy [i.e., will make you bowlegged]." An in-

[439]

formant who apparently equates frogs with snakes said: "I killed frogs and sold them to the [American] soldiers, but I never ate them myself. There were eels in the creek near Fort Sill. B. used to catch them. The soldiers bought them, but the Indians wouldn't eat them."

One voice was raised in appreciation of frogs' legs as food. The Eastern Chiricahua informant, previously quoted, who claims that his people ate fish, added: "They ate frogs' legs too. The meat tastes like chicken and is good."

THE ECONOMIC INTEREST IN RAID AND WAR

721

433

For men, raiding approaches hunting in economic significance. In fact, these two pursuits may be said to be rival industries:

[224]

The man who has a deer ceremony either does not go on raids or does not spend too much time on raids, so he will not lose his luck with deer. If you are too successful on raiding parties and bring back lots of booty, you become unlucky with deer; you don't see the deer and become a poor hunter.

This statement embodies a psychological and practical truism: The man who becomes engrossed in raid and war very likely has only limited time and interest to devote to the chase.

The raid is a recognized and integral aspect of the economy.

[533]

This finds expression in the songs. The words of a round-dance song, for instance, repeat: "The wagon goes along, they say,

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

MAINTENANCE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

333

they say." This has been interpreted to mean: "The Chiricahua are out by themselves. They see a wagon. They are glad because they know their warriors will bring in the spoils."

Glory and enhanced status may be the by-products of the raid, but the immediate aims of those who organize such expeditions and participate in them are direct and practical:

One party after the other went out. They went on raids because they were in need. They divided their booty among the poor in camp. Sometimes they traded it to the well-to-do. Sometimes the horses were traded for a woman [in marriage]; they were given to the girl's parents.

When the people are poor and need supplies, the leader says, "We must go out and get what we need." It is volunteer work. Whoever is in want of food and necessities goes. The leader heads the party, which is made up of men only. Women never go on raids.

E.'s father was a great leader. He helped the people many times when they needed things. One time he prophesied that they were going to take a lot of booty near a certain hill. He told the people that a provision train with food and goods of all kinds would pass there. They went there, and the wagons passed by, and they got the goods.

In the speech of a leader, who is about to direct an expedition, the raid is also pictured as a stern economic necessity:

You love your homes and children. But we are going to leave them. Forget them. We do not know what is going to happen. Prepare your weapons. . . . Do not be afraid. We want to accomplish something for our camp; for our people are in need. . . .

Since raid and war are viewed as industrial pursuits, unwillingness to participate in them is attributed to indolence rather than cowardice:

If a man wouldn't go to war, it was because he was generally lazy, just too lazy to get around, and his mind watery. Another person might have to push him around to get him to do anything. People who don't go to war are just lazy people; that's all. There may have been some industrious men who did not go to war because they were cowardly—but, of course, these men would never tell why they would not go to war if this was the reason. I suspect there were some who were afraid to die. You couldn't tell for sure. It was usually blamed on laziness.

There is no absolute terminological distinction between the raid and a war expedition. Both are aspects of behavior which is described by a single term meaning "they are scouting about"

721
433 or "they are raiding here and there." The unifying element again appears to be the interest in the spoils. "There is no difference between the raid and war; they are going to bring back whatever they can either way."

But there is a difference of primary intent which does distinguish the raid from the war expedition. The members of the raiding party have as their sole objective the garnering of horses, cattle, or unguarded possessions of the enemy. They do not go in numbers; they do not seek a bloody encounter. Descriptions of typical raiding parties emphasize the business-like procedure and the pacific attitude:

As few as five or six would be in the party. About ten is the most that would go. Usually, but not always, one who had power connected with war was along. It was just according to how it happened. Each man took a robe or two along. Each took along a little food in a bag tied to his belt. Often no food was taken along, and the man killed something to eat on the way. Water was brought in a little bag made of entrails, which was carried in the hand. One of the party would bring along a fire drill which was carried in the quiver. The cattle were freely roaming. They drove them off. If they were discovered by the owners of the cattle, they would usually run away without fighting.

When they are on a stock raid, they don't want to be seen. They sneak around. They are careful; they avoid meeting troops or taking life. It is different from a revenge party.

535 A raid is organized by some leader. He decides. In the morning and in the evening he gets on a horse, or stands, and speaks to the people. He calls for all men who wish to go. The war dance is not put on just for a raid for booty. When they go out looking for a fight, they dance the war dance. The booty of the raid is divided as soon as it is obtained. If three men drive off just a little stock, they would keep it all perhaps, though they could give some to others if they wished. If there are many men on a raid and a great deal is driven off, it is evenly divided among the men. The leader of the expedition sometimes gets even less than the other people from the proceeds of the raid. He is supposed to be generous like that.

But, very often, raiders who do not contemplate an actual conflict, find themselves involved in one before they reach home:

If we were raiding against Mexicans, a party would go down near the enemy's village and stay a short distance away while a few of the men went down and stole horses and cattle. Then, with these possessions, the party would start back. If the soldiers overtook us, there would be a battle.

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

MAINTENANCE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

335

It is when a raiding party is intercepted, or when disastrous retaliation on the camps follows a raid, that a real war party is formed:

721
726

Sometimes when the Chiricahua are on the raid, the enemy kills some of their principal men. The people whose relatives have been killed notify the leaders, warriors, and everybody—the entire encampment. Even though they are in sorrow they notify these friends to have a war dance. Following it they are going to go after the enemy, no matter where they have gone. All the warriors agree to it. Then they have a war dance that night for a few hours. The warriors bring their equipment, knives, bows, guns, and all the weapons they are going to fight with.

[535]

The atmosphere on this occasion is very different from that which marks the preparations for a raid:

During the war dance they show what they are going to use when they meet their enemies. This dance means that they are going after all their enemies, everyone except their own tribe members, any other enemies there are. It doesn't have to be the ones that killed their men. They go after anything, a troop of cavalry, a town. They are angry. They fight anyone to get even. When they go out this way, they fight to win. When they are out, they might meet the same enemy who killed their people. Then they turn for home after they have killed all their enemies.

[535]

But whether the occasion is a raid for spoils or a punitive expedition demanded by bereaved relatives, attention is likely to be directed to the enemy possessions:

727
433 •

They bring in the captured equipment—guns, saddles, ammunition. When the warriors come within sight of their camp, they all begin to shoot. Then everyone is happy.

When the news comes to camp that a victorious war party is returning (a scout is sent ahead with the news), everyone is excited because there will be things to distribute, and they say, "Let us beat the drum and sing to greet our heroes." The dancers are in two groups; one bunch eats while the other goes on with the dance.

When the men went to Mexico and fought, they would bring back booty of all kinds—blankets and horses. Then they have a dance which can take place in the day or night as soon as they get back. They dance around the fire and the scalp, if any was taken. Then the women dance with the men in the social dancing.

[535]

Before this the men dance, and they call off the names of the brave men who were down in Mexico. The men shoot off guns when a name is called. Then the man called makes up his mind and goes and brings blankets and things and puts them there.

[431]

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941

(ca. 1890) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

374

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

241
184
172
433
243
462
262

Another account from an Eastern band member adds to the picture:

We lived by hunting, fishing, and gathering plants. But we planted corn in May, too, with Mexican hoes that were traded up. The people kept camp near their farms then, tending the corn, watering it, and weeding it. Men and women both did the planting and other work. If the man was busy or off hunting, the woman would do it herself. Corn is a favorite food, because it can be used in a good many ways.

162
621
496

The Chiricahua picked up the trait [of planting] long ago in Mexico. Only some of the families planted corn, but they could share their crop with their neighbors. Only about six or seven families out of the hundred in a big encampment¹² might plant corn, and each family would do it on separate land. Others would help in the work on one of these plots, and then the owner would share the crop with them. The seeds came from the Mexicans, and many didn't plant partly because they didn't have seeds.

244

We also got beans, chili, squash, and watermelons from the Mexicans, and the Chiricahua learned to plant these. The Chiricahua never specialized on plants—each person who grew any, grew them all in his space. Some of the planted areas were as large as thirty acres, but there were no lines between; everything was free.

If some didn't want to plant, they could hunt. Then they would give their neighbors meat, and the farmer who had a great deal allowed anyone to take what he wanted. There wasn't any buying of things.

243

A more detailed description of the manner in which corn was planted by the Eastern Chiricahua is the following:

The corn is soaked all night. Then two or three kernels are dropped in a hole. They say the soaking makes it grow faster. Some plant the corn kernels deep. This is when they are not soaked. When you soak them, you don't bury them so deep. Beans and pumpkin and watermelon seeds are soaked first too.

241
771
773
824
825
782
300

Agriculture never became so important that its symbols were richly represented in religion or mythology. Occasionally, it is advised that the corn cob be put back in the husk to insure an abundant future crop, undoubtedly an extension of the custom of replacing the unused part of a medicinal plant. There is an association of the katydid with crop-raising: "The katydid is an insect the Chiricahua will not kill. We say it helps the crops grow. We pray to it to help the crops grow." In discussing the

114

¹² It is doubtful that encampments of one hundred families ever existed in pre-reservation days. The informant's estimates of population and of the size of farms seem excessive in this statement.

14] THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

133 level. Numerous canyons cut both sides of the range, and, during the rainy season, many small streams flow a short distance into the valley (15:22;9:4).

137
[132] Sulphur Spring Valley and adjacent mountains show marked variation in annual precipitation averaging, for the Chiricahua Mountains, more than twenty inches (15:78-83). Meinzer's (15:182-84) description of the native vegetation of Sulphur Spring Valley drainage basin shows western yellow pine as the dominant vegetation on the higher levels of the Chiricahua Mountains. On the foothills and lower ranges junipers and oaks are common, and in ribbons of timber which stretch along the stream courses, oaks and sycamores are the characteristic vegetation. The higher parts of the valley adjacent to the mountains support what he terms upland grass and brush zone, extending over three-fourths of the valley. Most of it is covered with a light growth of various grasses, but in the central and southern parts of the valley it includes extensive tracts of shrubs, especially creosote (*Covillea glutinosa*), as well as groves of Yucca. Lying on the middle and lower parts of the stream-built slopes is a zone of mesquite covering about one-sixth of the valley surface and also extending as scattered tracts on the upper slopes. A small portion of the valley area is covered with sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*). Low tracts, partly enclosed by the mesquite areas, support a zone of alkali vegetation—shadscale (*Atriplex canescens*), *Suaeda suffrutescens*, alkali sacaton or bunchgrass (*Sporobolus airoides*), and Mexican salt grass (*Eragrostis obtusiflora*). Finally, in the lowest part of the flat in the north basin is an area of about fifty square miles practically destitute of vegetation.

• 433
182 RELATION TO NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

It is especially important to understand the Apache's relation to his natural surroundings because his economy proceeded almost entirely on a hunting and gathering level. There was a late introduction of agriculture which will be

ETHNOBIOLOGICAL STUDIES

[15

There was a late introduction of agriculture which will be described presently, but its influence always remained slight. The Apache's efforts were not directed toward improving upon nature's offerings, but rather upon utilizing the largest number of natural goods, and using each one to the best advantage.

The utilization of plants for food, drinks, and narcotics was but one facet of this process, of course. In succeeding bulletins we expect to give some indication of the degree to which wild plants were used for medicines and for the making of tools, weapons, and artifacts in general. Every tree and bush had been tested for its qualities in all cultural contexts. Any Chiricahua or Mescalero above middle age will tell you that mulberry wood made the finest bow and that locust runs it a close second for this purpose. The wood of the chokecherry bush was the universal favorite among these Apache for arrows. Oak was considered the most durable for the outer rim of the cradle-board. The Apache took pride in matching his materials to the purpose at hand.

But to appreciate the total round of Apache life and thinking, and to comprehend the significance of many features of the culture, our understanding of the Apache's relation to his natural surroundings must penetrate even further. That relation does not halt with a minute scrutiny of the environment and the practical applications which flow therefrom. It involves the Apache's world conception and his total relationship to nature.

The Apache, however arrogant may have been his relations with his fellowmen, was entirely cognizant of his abjectness and dependence before natural forces. He relied upon nature's bounty and suffered when drought or inclement weather curtailed it. He never lacked for vigorous enemies. He was ever a prey to frightening sicknesses. In the battle of wits between him and the wild game he stalked he was many times out-distanced. Whatever hazards he surmounted, there were always old age and death to strike him down at last. In the words of his own prayers, before the forces of nature he was "a poor fellow," and "a pitiable object."

433 •
182
[241]
[77]

824
182

181
182
82

534

For musical instruments these Apache used the drum, the animal-hoof rattle, the musical bow, the flageolet, and a curious one-stringed fiddle made from the flowering stalk of sotol which may be of Spanish origin. In their peyote rite the Mescaleros accompanied their songs with the gourd rattle.

[276]
[796]

411

In addition to the shield and the bow and arrow, which have already been mentioned, the Mescalero and Chiricahua fought with spears, slings, flint knives, and war clubs of a number of types. Quivers, bow covers, and wrist-guards were other material items belonging to the war complex.

• 433

501

That these people made cradle-boards, fire drills, par-fleches, skin tipis, and cloths and blankets of buckskin and animal hides has already been indicated. Water transportation was solved by the construction of a crude bull-boat or raft-like structure.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

596

The tribe, band, and local group have already been described. The remaining social segment is the extended domestic family, which acted as the basic economic unit. Such an extended family would be housed in a cluster of individual dwellings and would ideally consist in an older married couple, their unmarried children, their married daughters, the sons-in-law, and the issue of these. As can be inferred from this, residence was matrilocal. All the cooking for the members of this family group was carried on at one place by the mother and her daughters, and the latter subsequently took portions of the prepared food to their husbands and children, for a mother-in-law—son-in-law avoidance was in effect. Whenever there was work to be done which involved the labor of more than one person, the men or women of this extended family, according to the nature of the task, assisted each other in its execution.

[591]

[252]

[606]

[476]

584

Marriage was arranged between the older kin of the man and woman involved, usually at the instigation of the young man, who, with the approval of his own relatives,